2027 Indiana Arborist Association Annual Conference

At-a-Glance Agenda | January 19–21, 2027

Tuesday, January 19

Welcome, Introductions & Updates

Time: 8:15–8:45 AM

Speaker(s): Lindsey Purcell, IAA Executive Director; Peter Fife, IAA President

Conference opening and chapter updates.

IAA Annual Awards & Apprenticeship Program Updates

Time: 8:45–9:30 AM

Speaker(s): Steve Lane, Response Growth Collective; Richard Karber, AEP, Awards Chair

Recognition of chapter contributions and updates on the U.S. Department of Labor–approved Registered Arborist Apprenticeship Program.

Competing Legal Interests in Street Trees

Time: 9:30–10:30 AM

Speaker(s): James Komen, Class One Arboriculture Inc.

Legal interests and competing responsibilities surrounding street trees.

Networking Break

Time: 10:30–11 AM

uTREE: Generative AI for Urban Tree Inventory & Scenario Planning

Time: 11 AM–Noon

Speaker(s): Brady Hardiman, Purdue University

NSF-funded decision-support platform combining satellite imagery, AI and environmental data; Indianapolis case study.

Lunch

Time: Noon–1 PM

Main Lobby Dining Area

Trees and Health: Learning from Green Heart Louisville

Time: 1–2 PM

Speaker(s): Dr. Theodore Smith, University of Louisville

Community-based clinical research on urban greening, biodiversity and human health.

You Have Lots of Things to Maintain—Why Not Add Traffic to the List?

Time: 2–3 PM

Speaker(s): Matt Krausher, Indiana Department of Transportation

Maintenance-of-traffic practices, roadway setups and resources for work affecting motorists and pedestrians.

Networking Break

Time: 3–3:30 PM

Digital Forestry Tools and Analysis for Arboriculture and Urban Forestry

Time: 3:30–4:30 PM

Speaker(s): Aren Flint, Davey Resource Group

Applications of AI, drones, species identification, risk assessment and climate-resilience analytics.

Wednesday, January 20

Vegetation Management: Brush and Weed Control—Application and Timing

Time: 8–9 AM

Speaker(s): Greg Ressler, Red River Specialties/Azelis

Herbicide selection and application timing.

An Introduction to Consulting

Aaron Dickinson, Arborcology Consulting

Consulting opportunities, professional standards, pitfalls and practice development.

Case Law Illustrations in Utility Vegetation Management

Time: 9–10 AM

Speaker(s): James Komen, Class One Arboriculture Inc.

Legal cases involving competing interests in vegetation management near utility rights-of-way.

SOPs in the Trades

Dean Ricci, Ricci Landscape Management

Practical, flow-based standard operating procedures and responsible use of AI for drafting.

Break with Exhibitors

Time: 10–10:45 AM

So, You Think Your Aerial Lift Will Magically Save You?

Time: 10:45–11:45 AM

Speaker(s): Wesley Tregilgas, Wright Tree Service

Aerial lift inspection, accident lessons and limits of electrical protection.

All Things Biochar: An Arborist's Guide

Zack Shier, Joseph Tree

Biochar quality, research, standards and applications in plant health care.

Lunch & Leadership Recognition

Time: 11:45 AM–1:30 PM

Main Lobby Dining Area

Introduction of the new president, past-president recognition and ceremonial gavel transition.

The Unintended Effect of Paclobutrazol on Plants

Time: 1:30–2:30 PM

Speaker(s): Chad Rigsby, Bartlett Research Laboratories

Anatomical and physiological effects of paclobutrazol and literature-supported uses.

Consulting Arborist Panel Discussion

Lindsey Purcell; Aaron Dickinson; Jud Scott; Jeff Ling

Professional consulting perspectives and discussion.

Common Plants That Are Toxic to the Skin

Time: 2:30–3:30 PM

Speaker(s): Andrew Mertz, Duke Energy

Plant species associated with dermatitis in the eastern United States.

Too Hot, Too Cold, Too Dry, Too Wet

Kyle Daniel, Purdue University

Plant physiological responses to heat, cold, drought and flooding, with management implications.

Stoked on Oaks

Time: 3:30–4:30 PM

Speaker(s): Mark Ware, Rainbow Ecoscience

Oak decline: biotic and abiotic stressors and integrated management.

Wood Decay and Fungal Identification

John Bonkowski, Purdue University

Decay indicators, pathogen identification and field evaluation of internal decay.

Thursday, January 21

Tips on Performing Site Assessments, Soil Sampling & Interpreting Results

Time: 8–9 AM

Speaker(s): Michelle Catania, The Morton Arboretum

Sampling protocols and integration of soil chemical, physical and biological assessments.

After the Storm: Crown Restoration Pruning of Storm-Damaged Trees

Time: 9–10 AM

Speaker(s): Jake Miesbauer, The Morton Arboretum

From storm response through sprout development and structural crown restoration.

Break with Exhibitors

Time: 10–10:30 AM

Waters C, D & E

The Best of the Best in Transportation

Time: 10:30–11:30 AM

Speaker(s): Dr. Fred Whitford, Purdue University

Best practices for transporting pesticides and application equipment.

IAA Leadership & ITCC Update

Time: 11:30 AM–Noon

Speaker(s): Peter Fife, IAA Board President; Aison and Brian Gresham, ITCC Committee Co-Chairs

New president welcome, past-president recognition, ITCC update and IAA Tree Fund raffle winners.

Lunch & Final Trade Show Visit

Time: Noon–1:30 PM

Main Lobby Dining Area

Last opportunity to visit exhibitors.

So Now What? Emerging Threats, Old Friends, and What's Next

Time: 1:30–2:30 PM

Speaker(s): Eric Biddinger, Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Emerging pests and diseases in Indiana.

State Chemist Updates

Time: 2:30–3:30 PM

Speaker(s): Aaron Kreider, Office of the Indiana State Chemist

Regulatory and program updates.

Conference information

Climbers Corner

Visit the trade show demonstration area for guest speakers and practical demonstrations. Specific times to be announced.

Continuing education

Turn in pesticide applicator continuing-education forms at the front table and retain a photo for your records.

Conference survey

Watch for the post-conference survey by email.

Get involved with IAA

Contact lindsey@indiana-arborist.org.

Save the date

2028 IAA Annual Conference: January 17–19, 2028.

Additional Conference Activities

Climbers Corner: Demonstration Area in Trade Show Hall; exact schedule TBD.


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TREE CARE


WRIGHT


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Indiana Department
of Natural Resources


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